1: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1965) 1967 MS14 Kanuri MS14

the money weekly to his wives for petty market purchases and does all major purchases of food and clothing on his own. He also pays for ceremonies, transportation, and most of the gift-giving engaged in by himself and others in the household. Except for the sale of cooked food, pottery production, and female hair dressing, men control all income producing work of any kind in the entire society.

Households as Consumers

Almost all people in Bornu use, obtain, or eat the things they need because they are members of particular households or are related to a nearby household as a subordinate of its household head. The patterns of consumption vary enormously from that of a rural peasant to that of a wealthy trader or political leader in the city. However, the vast bulk of the population stays within a fairly uniform range that involves a relatively low level of consumption. Most families, especially those in rural areas, eat two meals a day; one between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. and the other in the early evening between 8:00 and 9:00 P.M. Men of the compound and their male friends eat together while the women eat separately. Smaller snacks are eaten during the day, and in the city it is common to eat more often especially among salaried workers who return home for breakfast about 9:00 to 9:30 A.M. and finish the work day at 2:00 to 2:30 P.M. at which time they eat a noon-day meal. The average rural household consumes about eight pounds of millet (the staple grain food) every day, or about one and a half tons per year. The millet comes from farm products used by the household plus any buying that has to be done to augment this. For those few at the higher end of the social scale food bills can be enormous. One political leader in the capital claims that during his heyday he used to feed as many as seventy people a day and had to have a very smoothly-running household to get this much food processed and ready for his guests on a daily basis. In the ordinary peasant household men give their wives money on a weekly basis to purchase condiments for the staple food and sometimes meat as well although many of the richer men prefer to buy meat themselves. The money, usually anywhere from thirty cents to about $1.50 is given to the wife, or to each wife, or sometimes to the senior wife who then divides it among the co-wives.[1]

To an outsider Kanuri food seems almost infinitely expandable. I have often watched one bowl of food brought into the presence of a household head. He would glance around at the half dozen or so of us present and then ask us to join him, as he had to do by custom. On the other hand household heads have complained to me that they feed too many. "But what can we do?" they say, friends and would-be clients or subordinates know when food is to be brought, and they simply appear, at which point custom forces the host to be gracious. Those who eat continually at a friend's or a relative's house are in his debt and he may use their services as he wishes. This is one of the principal means by which clientship starts to operate. If the client eats with the patron, and the patron asks for services, and if both are satisfied, the relationship soon becomes an established one.

Clothing, like food, is in the hands of the household head although, and as

[1] Nigerian money is in pounds, shillings, and pence. I have translated values here at the rate of $2.80 American to £1 Nigerian.

592 464 571 self, he may become part of the small but growing proletariat in the cities, who work for wages for a European company.

592 571 It is interesting to note that under normal circumstances the relationship between the tata njima and the head of a household can be perpetuated after the tata njima has married and has set up his own small household--with his wife and children. The master of his household provides him with a bride since he has paid the luwaliram, and though the tata (son) has left the compound itself, he continues to acknowledge the relationship. He does this by returning regularly to eat at his master's house. [264] Patterns of eating form wide circles encompassing many households at times, and delineating a wider network of relationships. 592 571 182 The nature of the relationship between individuals outlined here is at the core of Kanuri social structure. It characterizes a social relationship, as well as an economic and political relationship; it is repeated at every level of Kanuri society, and in slightly different form it epitomizes the nature of political relations at the state level as well.

592 To recapitulate briefly, the household as a social unit may include the following classes of people:

1. An adult married male--master of the household.
2. Remainder of the nuclear family--his wife or wives and their children.
3. Members of the extended family--elderly parents.
4. Adopted children--either given to relatives (and therefore also part of the extended family), or given to chibuna.

796 bowls of food were sent out to the large group of men gathered
574 in the outermost courtyard, and eighty additional bowls, each
431 sufficient to feed four or five people, were distributed to families in the town. In all, 108 bowls of bəri, each costing about 2 shillings, were given away by the Ajia. Mass distribution of food in this manner is done three times each year, at Ngumɔri Ashembe, at Ngumɔri Layabe, and at Mamaludu Kuguibe. In a small town which has no Ajia, the Lowan distributes food to all the families of the town. In Geidam only the Ajia distributes food in this manner, although the Alkali also gives away a great deal on a smaller scale. In Maiduguri the Shehu and the Waziri both distribute great quantities of food, while the Ajia of Maiduguri does not.

796 That evening about thirty-five people were invited to a
574 second feast at the house of Alkali Baba Kura. The meal itself
[272] was essentially the same as that at the Ajia's, except that Krola (a Nigerian imitation of Coca-Cola) was served instead of Orange squash and clear mints were passed [illegible]nd with the kola
796 nuts. Though the feast itself was traditio[illegible]n every respect,
574 the manner of invitation was not. A list, headed by the writer
554 (referred to locally as Malam Ibrahim), was sent to all who were invited to attend. The group was made up largely of the NA Malams, the two Kanuri Lowans and the two most important ka-
[264] buna, one Kanuri and two Hausa traders, and a few others. Not present were Yerima Mustapha, who is too important a man to eat at another's house, any of the Limans or important Koranic Malams, the Hausa Lowan or the deposed Lowan Kagu, any craft heads,

602 Firstly, shame-avoidance
264 whose criterion is whether or not the incumbents may eat food together or in the presence of one another, and secondly, shame-respect wherein food may be shared but ego must sit with eyes downcast and only the most necessary conversation passes between the parties. As a general rule the first holds between affines, although Table I illustrates the variability in this respect, and the second holds among consanguinal kin. There is a strong shame-avoidance relation between ego and his senior in-laws (kèsai); that is to say he will not eat in their presence, and he will not enter a hut alone with any of his female kèsai unless he has been in the habit of doing any of these before marriage.(1) This latter refers to the case of a preferential cousin marriage or marriage with the daughter
606 of a close friend. A polite person (male speaking) would manifest signs of shame-avoidance behaviour, no matter what his previous relationship with his future father-in-law, around the time of the marriage. It is then up to the in-law in question to remind him of their prior relationship and to persuade him that there should be no nungu between them now that they are son-in-law and father-in-law to one another.

593 Ideally, ego should show shame-avoidance in the presence of his wife when they are in public and only the most necessary conversation should pass between them. After many years of marriage or in the case of a barren marriage depending on the wishes of the couple involved, much of the formality of shame-avoidance (except

(1) An upper class informant claimed that a man should never even visit his in-laws alone but should always go in the company of friends.

593 eating together) is dropped and the husband and wife often refer to each other by sibling terms.

593 565 In some cases, more often among the upper classes, if a mother and/or father are very young at the time of their first child, a mutual shame-avoidance should obtain between the parents [842] [853] and this child. Informants who knew of this custom (many lower class informants denied its existence) claimed that in such a case the young mother must be pushed and cajoled into giving her breast to the infant because she feels great shame in having given birth so early in her life. However, as soon as the parents have grown up somewhat and taken their place as adult members of the community, the shame-avoidance between them and their first-born dwindles to the more usual shame-respect held between children and their parents.

571 As indicated above, shame(nungu) is a general category which refers to restrictions on behaviour in interpersonal rela- [577] tions. In this sense it is generalized to include all good, proper [834] and moral conduct, both in and out of the kinship system. An individual should feel some nungu whenever he approaches a woman in public and she should keep her eyes to the ground, her head covered, if possible, and only the most necessary conversation should pass between them. These taboos are more stringently practised by mem- 576 [565] bers of the upper classes, although no man, regardless of class [264] ever eats with a woman. All respect behaviour between the lower classes and their social superiors implies some nungu. Thus in the law court an individual must keep his head uncovered and bent down (a woman keeps her head covered and originally spoke through a window from another room), and remain on his knees with feet tucked under his robe and his knees forward. Or again, shoes must be re-

836 101.
[589] husbands. These women (sower) are sexually available to all men, and are given gifts and market money for the sexual privileges they grant. The typical adolescent male has his first sexual experiences with a woman older than himself. However, when he decides to marry he usually tries to find a woman of roughly his own or of a junior age group.

582

885 First marriage marks the beginning of adult status for a
581 man. The event announces and enables a move towards semi-independence which is aided and abetted by the avoidance relation between his father and his wife, as well as by the subject-matter avoidance of his marriage in conversations with his parents. Furthermore, he now commands an independent source of cooked food, which he can use for hospitality and its return, whereas previously he was obliged to others for this service. Kanuri males consider this to be one of the most important reasons for getting married, especially at the lower ranks of society.

885 To understand the value placed on this function of marriage it must be
581 realized that man from about the age of fifteen or sixteen onwards like
264 to eat in the company of other men. Without a wife, a young man must
437 join a group of eaters one (or more) of whose wives prepare the food. For this privilege he is obligated to the food provider, an obligation which may include hoeing his farm, going on messages for him, helping him repair his compound, etc. With a wife a young man can return eating favours on the same terms, thus equating himself to his hosts and creating obligation (a) for return meals from men who have wives, and (b)
581 of a diffuse nature from men who have none. It will be shown later that a wife is also valued as a socio-economic asset in the determination of her husband's productive capacities.

583 Today, almost all men in rural areas, and many in the city,
434 derive some of the money for marriage from the cash crop. This determines

434 through bad debts or begging them, as he said, 10/- would be like 12/-, or perhaps as much as 14/- (he rejected 15/- as too high, 11/- as too low). That is to say, about 30% of his craft income from meat sales is lost through bad debts and the nature of Kanuri social relations, wherein property differentials are noticed, and giving of prop-
556 erty by its owner validates the differential. Because Mala Bukar is a relatively well-off man (for Magumeri) he must, unless he wishes to be considered miserly, mean and unsociable, give away some of his wealth in order to maintain the status he has achieved through its possession.

Consumption

511 In order to obtain a comparative index of living standards
128 for the Kanuri in terms of western measures, the consumption data in the following section are translated into money values calculated on the basis of the average household size in the sample survey of cultivators. Although this translation into western equivalents is a constructed figure, it gives a more precise definition to consumption practices than a merely qualitative description.

Food

264 For the peasant population, meals are customarily taken twice a day. A man, his sons past puberty, other male compound members, and possibly other male neighbours eat once in the morning, usually between 8 and 9 a.m. (lashi) and once in the evening again between 8 and 9 p.m. (bulta). Young children may or may not eat with the male
262 head, but usually do so if he is alone. The two main meals consist of
264 millet flour (penisetum typhoideum) made into porridge or dumplings (buri aryumbe) over which soup is poured, containing vegetables, fish or meat, groundnut-oil, and salt, as well as other condiments, especially red peppers. Occasional meals or snacks are taken during markets

3: Cohen E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1960 MS14 Kanuri MS14

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[264] where cooked food is sold, or at ceremonial gatherings when there is
[782] generally more meat present in the food, due to the practice of killing a goat or a sheep at almost all periodic religious ceremonies and rites de passage. Rice, wheat, guinea-corn, maize, boiled roots and leaves, squashes, cucumber, tomatoes, occra, groundnuts, milk, chicken, butter, cooked meats, and millet beer brewed by pagans are also periodic but small additions to the normal peasant diet.(1)

S 11 In the survey sample the average amount consumed per day per capita was 1.24 zaka(2) with almost the entire range (except for two cases) running from one to one and a half zaka per person. Using the zaka as roughly 1.6 lbs. of millet (it varies in size during the year) this means that for the most part the rural peasant eats 1.6 to 2.4
[435] lbs. of millet per day with a mean intake of 1.9 lbs. per person. The price of millet in Magumeri (1955-57) varied from 22/- to 20/- per bag (120 zaka), but remained for long periods at 25/- per bag. It follows then that for the period 1955-57 the average rural household of 3.9 (from the sample survey) or roughly four persons, required at least twenty-five bags of millet per year or about thirty-one pounds sterling in cash value at the prevailing market prices, as a minimum subsistence amount for their millet needs.

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[146] (1) From tests done in other sections of Northern Nigeria, it is estimated that the average peasant diet in the region as a whole, varies between 2400-2900 calories per day, with a general deficiency in proteins and vitamins, see Nicol, B.C., Nutrition in Nigeria, British Journal of Nutrition, Vol. 3 (1943) 25-43.

[804] (2) This was corroborated in the budget data. A zaka is a small gourd which is used as the standard measure in buying and selling small quantities of grain, beans and nuts. Four zaka equal one darum (a medium-sized calabash); four darum equal one ga (a large calabash), and there are 7.5 to 7.8 ga per buhu or large bag of grain, beans or nuts, i.e. about 120 zaka per buhu. Zaka of millet were weighed, measured and averaged to obtain English equivalents.

262 economic and rural/urban status. In upper class households, food may
262 be taken regularly three, four, or even five times during a day, with
• 264 a larger variety in the items included. Thus in the household of an N.A. employee in Magumeri, there are four separate meals in one day, and sometimes five - (1) early in the morning just after rising, millet porridge and a plain soup is taken, plus a small course of bèlàm (milk, rice or wheat, and sugar); (2) at about nine a.m., a light meal of bèlàm, some cooked rice and soup, and/or milk; (3) at twelve noon, chicken and rice, then (4) at seven p.m., millet porridge. Often a light meal of chicken and rice or even some fresh vegetables in season
262 is eaten in mid-afternoon. Because of the much richer variety of foods available from all over Nigeria, as well as the outside world, in tins, bottles or dehydrated condition, the city diet is more various and also somewhat more expensive for everyone, except the most indigent.

Clothing

294 The importance of clothing and cloth to the Kanuri is clearly observable in Bornu. Singer sewing-machines (pedal powered) are everywhere in the area, only the smallest hamlets being, at present, without them. In Magumeri, there were between six and eight constantly in use over a seventeen month period. On market day more machines appear from the city and surrounding towns, in the special tailors en-
441 closure at the market. When the cash crop is sold to the "scale" men, there is always a store of cloth kept by these buyers, who know that the peasant is very likely to purchase some textiles with his cash crop
2 286 receipt. Although there are very few words in the language for col-
192 ours, different textiles or the same material at different phases of
[521] wear are discriminated. There is a plethora of words denoting the different kinds of materials; and news of new brands, price changes, and